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EDITOR'S TABLE.

Naturalists need not feel unkindly just now towards representative Dingley of Maine, who introduced a bill for the destruction of the seal herd of Behring Sea, which has passed the lower house of Congress. From the point of view of the lover of nature this bill appears to be an atrocity, but everything does not appear on the surface. The sole object is to destroy the commercial value of the herd, so as to put a stop to the slaughter by reckless Canadian poachers. A sufficient number will be preserved to serve as a basis of a new herd, whenever the British and Canadian Governments are ready to join hands with us in the effort to preserve it. The Dingley bill is really a plan for preserving the herd and not destroying it. The fact is that our neighbors across the border have been running up a bill of small accounts against themselves, which will in the aggregate prove burdensome to them some day if continued. It is poor policy for a weak party to make itself unpleasant, especially when the stronger party is desirous of friendly relations. Canadians and Americans are really one people, and we ought to combine not only to protect the seals, but to increase their numbers, and develop the industry which depends on them.

Some naturalists think it is quite the proper thing to protest that it is of absolutely no importance whether they receive credit for a discovery or not, and it is more than intimated in print from various quarters from time to time, that interest in such questions is quite inconsistent with the lofty aims of science. We must confess to having become somewhat weary of this alleged elevation of sentiment, for we find human nature to be in scientific investigators not so very different from that which is common to the rest of mankind. Under the circumstances these protestations savor of cant. The naturalist like other men must live. In order to live he must be known; hence necessity forbids that he hide his light if he have any, under a bushel. And in fact the majority of naturalists do not do so. They understand the value of honest advertising. The product of a laborer should be labelled, first for his own advantage, and second for the information of others, who know his personal equation. What we want is honest goods with honest labels, and for these no protestations of pseudomodesty, or depreciation on the part of unpractical idealists, is in place.

We are pleased to notice the excellent scientific work which is being done by the Field Museum of Chicago. The management has called

to its aid a number of able scientific men, and is publishing the result of their work in suitable style. The papers of Hay on the Vertebral Column of *Amia*, and the skeleton of *Protostega*, are important contributions to knowledge. We hope soon to give an abstract of the illustrated paper of Holmes on the Yucatan ruins. It seems that the Museum is not to be merely a show place, but is to be a center of original research, worthy of the great city in which it is situated.

Perhaps a year ago we objected in rather caustic terms to the proposed publication by the Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, of the life and bibliography of Rafinesque. We are at the time under the impression that the club was a scientific body, and we were then of the opinion, as we are now, that such a society might easily find better use for its money than the publication of such a work. The fact is, however, that the object of the society is the preservation of historic records, and not of the results of scientific research. Hence the publication in question was precisely within its scope, and Prof. Call, the author, conferred a benefit on us all in writing the book. The history is a very curious one, and will interest even the non-scientific reader. Manuscripts in the possession of the U. S. National Museum show that Rafinesque had a skillful pencil, and that the figures which accompany his printed works do him injustice.

President Cleveland deserves well of his fellow countrymen for various reasons, but he deserves least, of his scientific constituency. His latest appointment, that of the U. S. Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, was made in spite of different recommendations of the scientific men of the country, and for reasons which are to this class quite inscrutable. The new appointee was, as we are informed, retired from the navy on account of rheumatism. He has no scientific knowledge or experience of the habits of fishes or the conduct of fisheries, and would seem to be physically incapacitated from learning. Doubtless the President has told him as the old lady told her daughter who asked her if she might go in to swim; father may I the fishes save from thoughtless cruel slaughter? yes, yes my son, save every one, but don't go near the water.